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THE NEED TO WANT

by Joseph Lister Rutledge

If one were inclined to look on the dark side of things it would be easy to believe that liberty is a dying cause. In our tortured world there are millions in whom the urge to be free has burned to grey ashes, the dull hope of survival. They have lived too long in the shadow of fear, fear of hunger and imprisonment and torture and death for themselves and those they love. They have known the power of a wickedness that has wiped out for them, the kindlier teachings of two thousand years. Where they look forward at all their despairing vision sees no farther than tomorrow's food and tomorrow's safety.

Let us not imagine that their case is not our case. They represent much more than half the people of Europe who dare not think or act for themselves. They occupy more than two-thirds of its acres. It is these hopeless millions who make the threat of another war so terrifying.

We still believe that the little undying spark in the human spirit that demands freedom is every where ready to break into flame. It is easy for us to believe. We have not lived under so near a threat. We devise and control and administer our own institutions. We think and act and speak as we choose. Not so the most of Europe. They are with out food, and must be fed. But our obligation goes further than that. They are without hope. We have to help these shrinking millions who want to be free again. Peoples who believe in freedom are the only hope the only protection against the rapacious dreams of despots big and little who despoil a world.

Only free people dare to be generous. Only free people can think as a world, with understanding of a world and consideration for its peoples. We have something to offer besides bread, something more precious and enduring. It is the confidence that man, made in the image of God, need not be subject to any despot whether that despot be a matter of misadventure and contriving.

Yes, we have to make these millions, who have learned to bow and compromise and accept, want to be free again.

That is what makes us wonder that so many people seem to be ready, so willingly, to sacrifice their

personal, God-given rights for that need of pottage that they call security. The people of Europe have learned to earn a measure of such safety by cringing before authority. To make them want to be free, shall we offer them only a little different brand by cringing, or the blue sky where only God is man's master?

CREDIT UNIONS

(continued from front page)

ected.

In April 1945, cash on hand was \$2,312.89, \$1989.50 had been loaned and \$229.88 had been collected as interest. In April of this year cash on hand was \$1599.58 and \$6,387.50 was out in loans.

Last year, loans totaled \$6,500 and interest received was \$479.35.

The first Credit Union in Canada was organized in Quebec in 1905 and they now have their own bank and loan to members free of interest charges.

This year we are celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Credit Unions and we hope it increases in popularity the next ten years as much as it has the last. Credit Unions are organized among various groups of people to allow them to handle their own credit through co-operation. No profit is made by the Credit Union. After all operating expenses are met and a sum set aside for a guarantee fund, all earnings are turned back to the members through a dividend paid on shares and a patronage dividend to those that have borrowed money during the year. All loans outstanding are insured against death or

permanent disability of the borrower. Many people believe that the Credit Union movement is of recent birth and to them such is the case, in so much as they have only now become aware of its existence. While it is primarily to the work of Raiffeisen who organized in 1849 a society to lend money to the peasant in the vicinity of Flammersfeld in Germany, that we on the American continent have turned for our guidance and inspiration, records show that the first co-operative Credit society using the name "Credit Union" was organized at Brussels in Belgium in 1848 by Francois Haack. Our ancestry, however is distinctly German. Victor Huber, who lived from 1800 to 1869 wrote of co-operation in Germany; in fact one of his early theses was entitled "Credit Unions and Loan Unions". He as it were, played the overture to the great drama of co-operative action which was about to be enacted. And the great players were Herman Schulze-Litzsch (1808 to 1883) and Frederick William Raiffeisen (1818-1888). Both experimented successfully with co-operative credit, and both evolved types of co-operative credit societies capable of rapid duplication eventually, not only in Germany but in all parts of the world.

Before leaving Germany it may be of interest to note again the economic conditions which gave such impetus to this development. It was a time of famine, and Raiffeisen was driven to his experiment with co-operative credit in a desperate effort to find some way of economic relief for his people in the little town of Flammersfeld where he was mayor. During Raiffeisen's period (1825-1888) Unions were organized and he was also instrumental in the development of a Central Union of his societies. After 1888 the spread to other parts of the world was very rapid.

CANADA 1900

Alphonse Desjardins brought the Credit Union to America. He was a journalist in Montreal—and as early as 1885 his interest in co-operative credit had been aroused by exposure to usurious money-lending in that city. He spent years studying the European precedents and organized the first Credit Union on the American continent in Lévis, Quebec in

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1900.

Desjardins told us: "The people's welfare can best be secured by institutions organized by the people themselves", and again, "Success for the young democracies of this continent depends on the prosperity and worth of life to the millions of working men who compose them", and again, "The People's Bank is the expression in the field of economics of a high social ideal. It is based on the high conception, wholly, just, equitable and fruitful, of 'union for life' instead of 'struggle for life'."

UNITED STATES, 1908

The Credit Union idea was brought into United States in 1908 when Desjardins was invited to Boston, Massachusetts, to cooperate in the preparation of a bill which, enacted by the Massachusetts legislature of 1909, supplied the first working model for general state legislation having to do with co-operative banking in the United States.

EDWARD A. FILENE
Prior to this historic meeting, another great figure had stepped on concluded on back page



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